

AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING BREAKS GROUND IN FARMERSVILLE / THE SUN GAZETTE

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The Los Arroyos 108-unit community is Self-Help Enterprises' first rental complex in Farmersville

FARMERSVILLE – The housing crisis in California is real, but at least Farmersville is getting a little help in closing the gap.

On Friday, April 22, Self Help Enterprises along with government officials in Farmersville and the county of Tulare joined in a groundbreaking where 108 units will be going up. The project, called Los Arroyos is intended to give residents a new and affordable place to live.

“Los Arroyos is going to be our first ever rental housing complex in the city of Farmersville, so it's a special day for us,” said Tom Collishaw, CEO of Self-Help Enterprises.

The project will provide permanent affordable rental housing to working people in Farmersville, with a focus on farmworkers and their families. Apartments will feature one, two and three-bedroom units, with a 3,000 square-foot community building, playground and open space for residents. The community building will include a computer lab, which will be available to adults and children for schoolwork and educational activities.

Self-Help Enterprises will offer Los Arroyos residents a robust onsite resident services program that will include job training, health and wellness services, financial training, homebuyer education and a variety of after-school activities for youth. The project will include a vanpool program in partnership with the California Vanpool Authority that will transport residents and the surrounding community to and from work. Monthly rents, ranging from \$392 to \$906, will be determined based on unit size and income.

“We have a lot of families that are doubling or tripling up in their households, in overcrowded situations. We have a lot of farmworkers in our city, and we unfortunately have a high rate of poverty. So affordable housing is really important to us,” said Farmersville Mayor Paul Boyer. Boyer was the Community Development Program Director for Self Help Enterprises for 43 years.

Boyer clapped and burst out with joy as Collishaw listed funds being awarded for the project and the city by the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program: \$7 million for transportation, \$2.6 million for a multi-modal transit hub, \$1.2 million for crosswalks, sidewalks and bicycle lanes and \$3.2 million for a vanpool and ridesharing program. The multi-modal hub will be on Front Street and will act as a transit center for Visalia Transit Bus lines that run through the community.

“Having this connection with the ability of our residents to get around to other communities, as well as in Farmersville, is really important,” Boyer said.

Los Arroyos will also be highly energy-efficient, with sustainable features including solar panels, water conservation and a gray water recycling system. The project's solar panel system will offset the power used in the common area, residential loads and community center, making Los Arroyos a grid neutral zero net energy project.

The 54 units included in Phase One of the project are being financed through a combination of AHSC program funds via California's Cap-and-Trade proceeds, Infill Infrastructure Grant Program, and Competitive Permanent Local Housing Allocation funding from the Housing and Community Development Department (HCD), and private equity raised through the federal low-income housing tax credit program. The AHSC program is administered through a partnership between the Strategic Growth Council and HCD. This phase is scheduled to begin construction in November 2022 and be complete in November 2023.

The project's second phase, 54 units designated for farmworker families, will begin construction this month and be completed by April 2023. It is being financed through a combination of Rural Housing 514 loans (USDA), the Joe Serna Jr. Farmworker Housing Grant Program (FWHG) from HCD, Non-Competitive Permanent Local Housing Allocation funds provided by City of Farmersville and Tulare County and private equity raised through the federal low-income housing tax credit program.

"We're really thrilled to be here starting this great project," said Collishaw. "Los Arroyos is really special to Self-Help Enterprises."